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of

THE FIFTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of the

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1987

by

HIS HONOUR

THE HONOURABLE ALAN R. ABRAHAM, C.D, D.Eng.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

I welcome you in Our Sovereign's name to this Opening of the Third Session of the 54th General Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia.

The world economy continues in transition and Nova Scotians, as do other Canadians, confront an accelerating pace of change as they move into the age of the information economy. The major components of the information economy are new technology and increasing competition.

In this new age our role will not be as traders from east to west or north to south, rather we must become active participants in the emerging global trading patterns. This will not be a new experience for Nova Scotians as we move to reclaim the place we held when our ships and products were well and favourably known in every port in the world. This time the goal is not success in an age of wind and sail, but success in an age of information, know-how, and technology.

The impact of the information economy will be profound. It will affect both traditional and emerging industries in the resource, service and manufacturing sectors. The information economy will have a major impact on the lives of Nova Scotians, the operations of business and on the operation of government. The challenge we face, is to make that impact beneficial.

Traditional programs, traditional approaches to economic development are no longer effective. Changing world conditions created by technology and increased competition are intruding rapidly on the ways we have always done things. Nova Scotia must respond thoughtfully, but vigorously to the challenge.

The information economy is a time not of mass production but a time when wealth is generated by ideas – ideas about new products and services – about adaptations and variations of old products – about new ways to manufacture those products more cheaply or to service and maintain them more efficiently.

During the Industrial Age when a plant site was chosen, the owners looked to infrastructure: transportation, natural resources, water (for both energy and transportation) and proximity to market. In this new electronic economy, a facility may be located anywhere and we no longer have to be as concerned about infrastructure. A determining factor for plant location is the quality of life: schools, environment, cultural and recreational opportunities.

In Nova Scotia we have begun to develop the real potential of our extraordinary mix of people to give ourselves a real competitive edge in the global market.

A major goal of my Government is working with Nova Scotians to have Nova Scotia recognized globally as a place offering excellence and for the quality of life and its people.

It is essential for all Nova Scotians to begin planning for the transition from doing business in an industrial economy to doing business in an information economy. Government can and will assist, but the plan must reflect primarily the aspirations of workers, consumers and business.

The plan will be a timetable for change. It will enable us to determine what will happen to our jobs and our industries. It will guide us as we restructure our institutions to meet the needs of tomorrow.

Through the plan my Government will work to enhance the natural resource sector of our economy through the identification of goals for resource development and the implementation of strategies to enable us to attain those goals.

My Government is confident the traditional determination and dedication of Nova Scotians constitute the base on which we can build.

The information economy does not supplant our traditional sources of livelihood, rather, used resourcefully, it will enhance them.

Another major goal of my Government is to plan for the production of value added products and to provide increased marketing support to create an improved climate for private sector investment in our traditional resource sector.

Manufacturing and the traditional resource industries are being transformed through the use of automation, robots, computerized information services and modern communications capabilities.

The demand for our traditional resources does not grow smaller but the methods of production and the products we ship will change as we become more competitive.

My Government believes that the information economy necessitates advances in our traditional manufacturing and resource techniques - using new ideas and new technologies as critical factors of production.

My Government is determined to work together with Nova Scotians in a **Partnership For Progress** -- a partnership that will ensure we sucessfully meet the challenge before us. Through this partnership we will develop strategies and initiate the action programs required to achieve the goals of a progressive province in the next decade.

My Government believes the duty of government is to implement the will of the people and is, therefore, determined to build opportunities and provide protection to ensure a new and even better Nova Scotia.

It is in the spirit of determination to meet the challenge of change that my Government will continue and increase its efforts to assist people, communities, labour and business to develop and diversify our provincial economy. At the same time my Government will continue to protect the people from events beyond their control.

During the Second Session of this 54th General Assembly, my Government announced substantive new initiatives to help Nova Scotians enter this new era of information and technology. New initiatives in the fields of:

Small Business;

Economic Development;

Education and Training;

Housing;

Tourism;

Forestry;

Energy;

Health;

Education; and

Social Services.

My Government believes in and is committed to partnership, consultation and co-operation because our province can only succeed in meeting its goals for the new economy through participation of all Nova Scotians. It is important to maintain our community values. Our communities and institutions must be partners with government.

The strategies in the plan of partnership for progress relating to economic growth and job creation will include:

- Building on our traditional resources;
- Encouraging further processing and other methods of adding value to Nova Scotia resources;
- Increasing productivity and competitiveness of Nova Scotia industries through the application of new technology;
- Achieving standards of excellence in education and training for Nova Scotians;
- Facilitating the practical application of research and development by our universities to the Nova Scotia workplace;
- Creating information networks to encourage diversification of our economy;
- Establishing trading relationships to create access to new market opportunities for Nova Scotia goods and services;
- Improving transportation and telecommunication facilities to ensure access to markets not only for goods but also for information;
- Maximizing the use of our indigenous energy resources to reduce dependence on out-of-province energy;
- Assisting our service industries to achieve excellence in the marketplace; and
- Improving relations among all levels of government.

The strategies in the partnership for progress relating to the quality of life include:

- Ensuring there is enough money to pay for our programs for people;
- Protecting and enhancing Nova Scotia's environment in all its aspects;
- Implementing programs to ensure true equality for women in Nova Scotia;

- Augmenting the availability of day care services for young Nova Scotians and their families;

- Extending the opportunity for Nova Scotia students to achieve computer literacy;

- Reviewing the public school curriculum to ensure our students are receiving the proper grounding in the fundamentals;

- Enhancing training programs so that young Nova Scotians are prepared to perform the jobs of the new economy;

- Continuing initiatives to enable Nova Scotians to live longer, healthier and more productive lives;

- Improving programs to ensure senior citizens are able to live and enjoy the lifestyle of their choice;

- Putting in place policies to enhance the quality of family life in Nova Scotia; and

- More vigorously enforcing the laws against family violence.

My Government is committed to listening and consultation with Nova Scotians. The success of this approach is evidenced by:

- The development of a new forest policy for our province;

- The home care consultative process;

- The Hazardous Waste Task Force;

- The community college dialogue;

- The Task Force on the Family;

- The Royal Commission on Higher Education.

- The 1985 Provincial Conference on the Economy

PLANNING FOR GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

My Government is determined to plan and control expenditures in the most effective and efficient manner. Value for the taxpayer's dollar is my Government's objective.

For the last number of months my Government, through the Public Service of Nova Scotia, has been engaged in a major strategic planning initiative. This planning process has been the most extensive self-examination ever undertaken by Government in Nova Scotia.

The objectives of this strategic planning initiative have been to ensure Nova Scotians receive the best value from existing Government resources and programs, to encourage excellence in our Public Service and to bring about strategic change.

My Government, as a result of this process, has set objectives. Initiatives and measures to achieve these objectives will be implemented as part of our **Agenda of Action**.

Program systems are being developed so that my Government will be able to make program and service decisions on a basis of need, value and affordability.

My Government is seeking advice on the most effective and efficient means to ensure information and technology are applied to the management of government.

My Government is dedicated to the continuance of the strategic planning process as an ongoing instrument of sound management.

NOVA SCOTIANS: BUILDING STRENGTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH PEOPLE

In the industrial era the strategic resource was capital. In the information economy the strategic resources are information, knowledge and creativity. In an information society, human resources are a society's competitive edge.

The greatest of our strengths – our greatest resource – is our people. To compete successfully, we must build on our strengths.

My Government accepts the new information society as a real economic opportunity for Nova Scotians – a real opportunity to achieve our strategic economic goals of job opportunities for our people and progress through economic growth.

My Government is dedicated to working together with Nova Scotians to accept and meet the challenge posed by emerging world economic conditions. My Government will continue to ensure the new technology of the information economy is put to work for the maximum benefit of all Nova Scotians. Success will not be achieved easily, but it must and will be achieved.

To achieve success, government, labour, business and community leaders will have to rethink their methodology, their plans and their management style in order to ensure Nova Scotia products and services enjoy competitive advantages in the marketplace.

Our Country and our Province have to compete in a world where the issue is not merely selling a product but selling a solution to somebody's problems. Problem solving is an integral part of marketing.

My Government believes academics, labour leaders, business and government must become more oriented toward synthesis and co-operation. Relationships are key elements of wealth creation in the information age.

The resources of the arts, entertainment and crafts contribute greatly to the quality of life and the economic development of Nova Scotia. My Government is conscious of the tremendous contribution made to all aspects of our Province by the artistic community. My Government will introduce measures to establish a new mechanism to co-ordinate Government arts policies and assistance.

My Government has established the Council of Applied Science and Technology and will be taking further initiatives to encourage all our academic institutions to devote a greater portion of their activities to research and development to enhance Nova Scotia's competitive position.

A key role will continue to be played by our education and training facilities.

My Government is determined to maintain momentum toward a full employment economy with the necessary training and retraining initiatives to help people adjust to the changing needs of the marketplace.

In the last Session of the House of Assembly, legislation was passed establishing the Department of Vocational and Technical Training. Through the leadership of this department several exciting new training initiatives have been developed – such as the nine million dollar Flexible Manufacturing Program at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology – the only program of its kind in North America. Through this program, young Nova Scotians are being trained in the occupations needed in an information society. This program is illustrative of what can be achieved when Government, industry, workers and educators work in co-operation and consultation.

Similarly, my Government is funding tourism training initiatives at several of our academic institutions.

My Government, through the Department of Vocational and Technical Training, is currently working with concerned Nova Scotians to establish a provincial community college system. The community college system will enhance the province's training and re-training ability so that Nova Scotians will be best equipped to take advantage of job opportunities in an ever changing economic world. My Government is dedicated to continuing to work with our people so that Nova Scotians are equipped with the skills required in the workplace of the future.

Steps will be taken to ensure that students in the schools of Nova Scotia are obtaining the skills they need to compete. The basic school curriculum will concentrate on the acquisition of basic reading, communication and mathematical skills.

There will be further emphasis on computer technology and a major program will be launched to encourage computer literacy.

Nova Scotia is the centre of higher education in Atlantic Canada.

My Government will work with our universities to establish centres of excellence dedicated to meeting specific educational needs of the new economy.

An example of innovative action of my Government is the university level Food Sciences Program at Acadia University. This program is an important linkage in my Government's plan to revitalize traditional industries. It will have a major, positive impact on agriculture and its associated processing industries as well as on tourism.

Similarly, advances are being made in the contemporary fields of biotechnology and hydroponics. My Government plans action to assist future farmers of Nova Scotia in a greater understanding of technology.

My Government is determined to create an atmosphere that includes a flexible attitude towards changing markets and technology.

My Government will provide leadership through working with concerned Nova Scotians to ensure a more skilled, flexible and motivated workforce readily adaptable to change.

My Government is committed to enabling Nova Scotia's educational training system to play the most effective possible role in developing excellence and assuring relevance.

PROTECTION

My Government remains dedicated to the protection of all Nova Scotians. My Government is determined to maintain quality education, health care and social services. In my Government's view, these programs are essential to enable Nova Scotians to best take advantage of the opportunities our province offers.

My Government's commitment to economic diversification and growth is the means by which we will ensure that we can afford to continue to provide our programs for people.

In the last Session of this House, my Government announced a major province-wide hospital construction program designed to improve health care facilities throughout Nova Scotia. My Government is pleased to report substantial progress has been made in carrying out that program.

My Government will place a renewed, strong emphasis on preventative medicine as a means not only to control health costs in the future, but to ensure Nova Scotians live longer and more productive lives.

My Government – working together with senior citizens through the Senior Citizens Secretariat and the Nova Scotia Senior Citizens Advisory Council, has developed one of the most extensive networks of seniors' programs in Canada.

My Government will continue to consult the senior citizens to ensure ongoing continued response to their concerns.

My Government will act on recommendations reached through the seniors' consultative process with regard to home care for seniors and disabled Nova Scotians.

My Government will maintain and build on the existing network of seniors programs.

My Government is particularly pleased with the initiatives taken by the Nova Scotia Command of the Royal Canadian Legion in agreeing to work with the Senior Citizens Secretariat to make available to all Nova Scotia seniors, the resources of the Legion. My Government looks forward to working with other volunteer groups.

My Government is dedicated to working with all Nova Scotians to improve the quality of life for our families – to ensure our Province remains an excellent place in which to live and work.

My Government, in June of this year, will hold the first Nova Scotia Conference on the Family. This conference, to be held in Antigonish, will focus on the role of the family and on the roles of society and government in enhancing family life.

Steps will be taken to increase awareness and to discourage acts of family violence.

It is imperative that the historically based injustice of gender based pay discrimination be corrected. Steps will be taken to develop a mechanism to ensure equal treatment for men and women in the modern workforce.

My Government will review the provision of day care services for Nova Scotians and the contribution they make to the lives of our people.

My Government announced a major housing development program for Nova Scotians. I am pleased to report that the 1986 goal has been surpassed. The strategic goal for 1986 was 1,000 units of government-assisted housing. In the year since that commitment, over 1500 new government-assisted housing units for Nova Scotians have been provided. My Government continues its commitment to ensuring housing for all Nova Scotians.

My Government will be taking major initiatives to protect and maintain the unique environment that is a major ingredient in our quality of life.

My Government will provide leadership in developing and coordinating action plans for the solution to environmental concerns.

My Government will take an active role in the planning and implementation of environmental enhancement projects such as sewer and water facilities in our municipalities including commencement of the Halifax Harbour clean-up.

My Government will take steps to increase penalties for deliberate environmental pollution.

The Task Force on Hazardous Wastes will make recommendations to the Minister of the Environment. My Government will act on those recommendations.

My Government is determined to protect the working traditions and rights of our fishermen.

My Government will continue to be a strong voice speaking on behalf of the needs of Nova Scotians in Canada.

My Government's first commitment is to Nova Scotia and it shall continue to vigorously defend that commitment.

My Government will continue to work to resolve the problems of regional disparity.

Regional disparity and the tensions it generates are major realities in this Country. My Government will continue to work with other Governments and all concerned Canadians to develop meaningful solutions to this long-standing problem.

My Government's commitment is to continue to work together with Nova Scotians to build a stronger and better future.

DIVERSIFICATION AND GROWTH

My Government in its strategic planning, has designated the natural resource sectors as the priority for economic development.

Nova Scotians are proud of the accomplishments of our natural resource industries:

Agriculture

Fishing

Forestry

Mining

Tourism

My Government will be taking measures to enhance the diversification and development of Nova Scotia's economy through these traditional areas of strength.

My Government will continue to work with Nova Scotians to apply new technology to these industries.

Examples of success are the modernization of our pulp mills, our new forestry policy and the recent agreement with the Government of Canada to extend the Federal-Provincial Forestry Development arrangement. My Government will continue its innovative efforts to encourage increased and better silviculture activities in Nova Scotia's woodlands.

As part of its **Agenda of Action** my Government will take additional steps to apply new technology to agriculture and will continue working toward a new Agriculture Agreement with the Government of Canada.

The year 1986 saw record levels in the value of production in Nova Scotia's Fishery.

My Government, in partnership with Nova Scotia Voluntary Planning, will be conducting a complete review of the existing Fisheries Policy Statement. The objective of this review will be to develop, in consultation with the participants in the fishery, a new fisheries policy statement.

My Government is presently developing, in partnership with concerned people, a management plan for inland fisheries.

Mineral exploration during the last year has surpassed all previous levels in Nova Scotia history. My Government will work with those involved in the mineral sector to encourage further exploration activity through a mineral investment stimulation program.

As part of my Government's strategy of maximizing the use of our natural resources to build a better life for our people, the extensive program of development of thermal power generating plants, using Nova Scotia coal, will continue.

The inter-dependence of harvesting and manufacturing, the adding of value to natural products, improved marketing support and expanded training and the development of our human resources are the objectives of my Government's natural resources plan.

The public's understanding of the importance of the natural resource sector to the economy of Nova Scotia must be enhanced. My Government, working with people engaged in these sectors, will take initiatives to better inform all Nova Scotians and improve public understanding of the benefits and contributions that proper resource management brings to our province.

The potential of Tourism to contribute to the growth of Nova Scotia's economy has already been proven. In the last Session of the House of Assembly you were informed of a focused marketing theme of the Department of Tourism and of the department's co-ordinated regional tourism marketing strategies. My Government intends to build on these initiatives as well as to expand its encouragement of Nova Scotians to "See Nova Scotia First."

Events such as the current 1987 Canada Winter Games in Cape Breton and the 1987 International Gathering of the Clans clearly demonstrate Nova Scotia's ability to compete fully and effectively in the highly competitive tourism marketplace.

My Government believes that its program for diversification of Nova Scotia's economy needs the support and co-operation of all sectors. In this regard, my Government will continue the process of consulting widely on the establishment of targets for economic development. My Government will continue to encourage all Nova Scotians to take part in and benefit from these consultations.

My Government will continue to listen to Nova Scotians through such mechanisms as:

- Voluntary Planning of Nova Scotia;
- The Council of Applied Science and Technology;
- The Premier's Planning Advisory Committee;
- The Regional Small Business Advisory Boards;
- The Minister's Advisory Council on Tourism; and,
- The Select Committee of this House on Tourism.

To support small business, my Government will implement new initiatives among which will be two new computer services. These government computer services will make it easier for businesses and any concerned Nova Scotian to obtain information on government activities and programs.

My Government will provide leadership to ensure that Nova Scotia business is prepared for the future.

TRADE

Trade policy is vitally important in achieving success in this most competitive world economy.

My Government will take leadership steps to help our industries and our businesses identify opportunities in international, national, regional and inter-provincial trade.

Two years ago this Assembly passed legislation establishing the Trade Development Authority of Nova Scotia. This Authority will continue to provide leadership in expanding Nova Scotia's trading opportunities to targeted countries throughout the world.

My Government will continue to play a vital role in making increased access to international trading markets a Nova Scotian and Canadian priority. My Government is actively involved in the consultative process with the Government of Canada with regard to their discussions on trading relations with the United States. Seventy-five percent of Nova Scotia's trade is with the United States. Improved and secure market access to the United States market is most important to Nova Scotia.

My Government will continue to work to ensure that increased access to the United States market is enshrined in a binding treaty with an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism.

My Government believes that equally important in such a treaty is the need for assurances of retention of national and domestic political sovereignty and freedom to act in important policy areas such as regional development, agriculture, and social and cultural affairs.

My Government is also participating in the consultative process with the Government of Canada concerning the Punta Del Este round of G.A.T.T. negotiations.

My Government will continue to promote the sale of Nova Scotia goods and services abroad and will increase efforts to capitalize on recently established relationships in different parts of the world.

My Government will continue the policy of increased purchasing of quality Nova Scotia products and services by government and by companies doing business with government. This policy constitutes another action plan on the part of my Government to help the province's business community achieve greater success.

My Government will work hard to provide leadership in assisting Nova Scotians to meet these challenges.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my Government reaffirms its dedication to working with Nova Scotians in a **Partnership For Progress** through a common purpose and shared vision to ensure Nova Scotia is prepared for the fundamental challenges ahead.

This year, for the first time in Nova Scotia history, a Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee will be appointed from the Opposition ranks of this House.

Various legislative measures will be placed before you for your consideration.

The Public Accounts for the year ended 1986 will be presented for your consideration, as will the Estimates for the fiscal year to begin April 1, 1987.

My Government believes it is important to move quickly to begin to implement the **Agenda of Action** to ensure a prosperous and progressive Nova Scotia.

To these and all other matters which may come before you, I ask your most careful attention praying that sound judgement and Divine Providence may guide you in all your deliberations and decisions.

God Save the Queen.

God Bless Nova Scotia.

God Bless Canada.